

















# MAIL SUPPLEMENT TO THE HONGKONG FREE PRESS.

HONGKONG, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11th, 1890.

## RAILWAYS IN CHINA.

I may be interesting at the present moment, when an attempt is being made to float a scheme for the connection of Canton with Kowloon by railway, to recall an effort made a quarter of a century ago to start a pioneer railway in Kwangtung. In the year 1864, had been published Sir Macdonald Stephenson's project for a railway in China, and the vastness of the field afforded by this empire for railway enterprise and all the improvements following in the wake of the iron road, had given rise to a great deal of speculation and discussion. The question evidently got beyond the domain of mere speculation, however, for in June, 1865, we find a meeting was held in Hongkong of those interested in the introduction of railways into China. The immediate subject of attention at this meeting was a contemplated experimental line between Canton and Kowloon, a distance of about twelve miles. A committee was appointed to ascertain the feelings of the Chinese authorities on the subject and in due time to seek an interview with the Viceroy of the Two Kwang to obtain his consent for the undertaking. A company had been already formed under the name of the Chinese Railway Company, Limited, for the purpose of carrying out the enterprise as soon as leave should be granted, and it was fully expected that the British Minister at Peking would enter heartily into the views of the promoters and give them his powerful support.

It was unfortunately for the undertaking and its promoters that they were met a quarter of a century before the feelings of the Chinese officials. The time was not ripe for railways in China, and the Company formed with such sanguine hopes perished of inanition. The promoters of the China Railway Company were not even content with supporting the British Minister. Sir Rutherford Alcock, though disposed to back up his countrymen in most matters, held that it was impolitic at that stage to put pressure on the Chinese Government in order to force it to undertake reforms or improvements. In a despatch to Lord Salisbury, then the British Minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock, though disposed to back up his countrymen in most matters, held that it was impolitic at that stage to put pressure on the Chinese Government in order to force it to undertake reforms or improvements. In a despatch to Lord Salisbury, then the British Minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock, though disposed to back up his countrymen in most matters, held that it was impolitic at that stage to put pressure on the Chinese Government in order to force it to undertake reforms or improvements.

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for Chinese officials to accomplish. Meanwhile the Viceroy of the Two Kwang appears to have decided to allow the project to be carried out in Hongkong being allowed to undertake one section of the work—namely, from Canton to Kowloon. Eventually this will be continued from Canton to Hankow, and the Viceroy is shrewd enough to see that the commencement of one part of the work will probably help forward the construction of the whole. The project is a most important one, and its construction will be watched with keenest interest in Hongkong.

## TOKIN AND JAPAN COAL.

In another column we reproduce from the Japan Mail an article on Tonkin versus Japan coal, which is founded on one which appeared in the Tokyo Shimbun. From this it is very clearly seen that the Japanese are always to the coming competition of Tonkin coal with the produce of the mines of Kijuhui, and that they have not underestimated its importance. The Tokyo journal admits with sorrow that Japanese merchants have allowed themselves to be carried away by a penny-wise and pound-foolish policy, and have exported a vast amount of rubbish, which has brought Japanese coal into disrepute. This is perfectly true. A great deal of coal from Chikusen lately passed on this market has been of a most inferior description, so bad in some cases that it was impossible to keep steam up without mixing it with a dose of kerosene. Since the Japanese supply failed, the only really good Japanese coal on the market has been the better quality of Miki, and this fuel has seldom had fair play, as it has, for the sake of cheapness, often been mixed with Havana or Chikusen. Even, however, if the quality of the Japanese coal be materially improved it will not be a disadvantage to the British. The Tonkin mines are once in full working order. The Tonkin coal—we are not now alluding to the surface coal, which is what the Inspector-General of Mines dealt with in his official report, based on trials of the mineral gathered from the surface or at little depth—is a semi-bituminous coal, little burns with great brilliancy, and is of a great heat, if almost smokeless, makes no slag, and burns slowly to ash. As compared with Japan coal the trial on the Messageries Maritimes steamer *Yuzubaru* showed that Tonkin coal afforded the same steaming power burning two-thirds of the quantity that would have been required of the former. Now, if this quality can be laid down in Hongkong at the same price as the best Miki coal, it will be preferred to it on the score, first of economy, and secondly of cleanliness, to say nothing of the fact that it requires scarcely any stoking. In fact, the initial cost of probably the only, though the Tonkin coal will have to encounter will be the difficulty there will be of making engineers and firemen understand that it must be let alone, and not perfunctorily stoked. In Hongkong on the river steamboats, where they have been a difficulty, the burning of this coal will be a great advantage. It is a glowing heat that gave them all they wanted. But the conditions under which it burns will be specially discovered on ocean steamers, and once used there can be no doubt of the preference that will be given to Tonkin coal. The initial cost of probably the only, though the Tonkin coal will have to encounter will be the difficulty there will be of making engineers and firemen understand that it must be let alone, and not perfunctorily stoked. In Hongkong on the river steamboats, where they have been a difficulty, the burning of this coal will be a great advantage. It is a glowing heat that gave them all they wanted. But the conditions under which it burns will be specially discovered on ocean steamers, and once used there can be no doubt of the preference that will be given to Tonkin coal.

## SANITARY QUESTIONS.

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to change his residence. As it is, his ventilation of the house is not only led to a decision to remove, but also to a decision to improve the arrangements for the removal of household refuse which will be even a greater convenience to the neighbourhood than the handy but unwholesome bin. The facility the Sanitary Board affords for the ventilation of complaints as to bad smells etc., is beginning to be pretty widely appreciated, and the result is a most satisfactory. We are not surprised, however, that some of the members should object to having their time taken up by complaints of private nuisances as to which the parties complaining have the remedy in their own hands. An offensive public dust-bin or a defective drain is matter in which it is necessary the Sanitary Board should move if any action at all is taken, but where, as in the case of the manuring of Chinese gardens, an easy remedy is provided by law the party complaining should be left to communicate with the Police or take out a summons in his own name.

The most serious matter discussed on Friday was the system of conservancy, or the Colony to adopt the water closet system, or continue the pail-system. That the former would be unsuitable to the bulk of the Chinese population and attended with grave dangers there can be no doubt, but that in no reason why it should not be adopted in European houses or in Chinese houses also if the occupants chose to ask for it and comply with the conditions. It is not likely, however, that any such application would be received from the Chinese, so that practically the question may be dismissed as affecting the European community. The only really good Japanese coal on the market has been the better quality of Miki, and this fuel has seldom had fair play, as it has, for the sake of cheapness, often been mixed with Havana or Chikusen. Even, however, if the quality of the Japanese coal be materially improved it will not be a disadvantage to the British. The Tonkin mines are once in full working order. The Tonkin coal—we are not now alluding to the surface coal, which is what the Inspector-General of Mines dealt with in his official report, based on trials of the mineral gathered from the surface or at little depth—is a semi-bituminous coal, little burns with great brilliancy, and is of a great heat, if almost smokeless, makes no slag, and burns slowly to ash. As compared with Japan coal the trial on the Messageries Maritimes steamer *Yuzubaru* showed that Tonkin coal afforded the same steaming power burning two-thirds of the quantity that would have been required of the former. Now, if this quality can be laid down in Hongkong at the same price as the best Miki coal, it will be preferred to it on the score, first of economy, and secondly of cleanliness, to say nothing of the fact that it requires scarcely any stoking. In fact, the initial cost of probably the only, though the Tonkin coal will have to encounter will be the difficulty there will be of making engineers and firemen understand that it must be let alone, and not perfunctorily stoked. In Hongkong on the river steamboats, where they have been a difficulty, the burning of this coal will be a great advantage. It is a glowing heat that gave them all they wanted. But the conditions under which it burns will be specially discovered on ocean steamers, and once used there can be no doubt of the preference that will be given to Tonkin coal.

By the great bulk of the population, however—the Chinese—the pail system will continue to be the one employed. But the first essential to the successful working of this system is facility for the removal of refuse. The Chinese are to be dealt with in the new houses built in their neighbourhood was one of the most important. The Chinese mind goes habitually to consider them in all their bearings, and at last ceases to look with alarm upon progress in any of these directions. In my way I think I see a gradual change, full of promise, even as regards the introduction of railways. And if they should be induced to their own line, to have a survey made for a short line between the capital and Taku, the port of Tientsin, from whence immediate practical advantages would result to the Government and population, a decision to undertake the work might be quickly and easily followed. But if any foreign Representative were to broach the subject and endeavour to bring about a prompt decision, I feel assured the result would be indefinitely postponed.

## A WARNING.

Devoted of any desire to act the gloomy role of a Cassandra and predict the approach of a disaster, or of even seeming to cry "Woe!" when the danger is imaginary, we yet feel constrained to address a word of warning to the residents of Hongkong generally. It is now nearly twenty years since the great typhoon of 1874, which, by its violence, caused untold mortality and enormous damage to shipping and property. Since that time only one typhoon, and that a small one, has visited Hongkong; these storms so frequent in the Pacific having passed us by with the rarest of visits. It is not to be expected, however, that the typhoon of 1874, which, by its violence, caused untold mortality and enormous damage to shipping and property, should be repeated. It is not to be expected, however, that the typhoon of 1874, which, by its violence, caused untold mortality and enormous damage to shipping and property, should be repeated.

them are too apt to be regarded as exaggerations or the record of phenomenal disaster, and to be repeated. We can only hope, that this may prove to be the case, but in the meantime we have to deal with the doctrine of chances, the law of probabilities. These teach us that every year brings us nearer to the inevitable recurrence of these fearful gales. We are in the region of the Pacific, where the storms are frequent, and the result is a most satisfactory. We are not surprised, however, that some of the members should object to having their time taken up by complaints of private nuisances as to which the parties complaining have the remedy in their own hands. An offensive public dust-bin or a defective drain is matter in which it is necessary the Sanitary Board should move if any action at all is taken, but where, as in the case of the manuring of Chinese gardens, an easy remedy is provided by law the party complaining should be left to communicate with the Police or take out a summons in his own name.

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## A DEFECT IN THE LAW.

The discovery that there is no law against the adulteration of food in this Colony will have taken most of our readers by surprise. We are to be told that a Chinese milkman was charged with adulterating his milk with water. The facts of the case were clearly proved, but the Magistrate found they did not establish any offence against the law. Formerly adulteration was an offence, but the provision making it such has been repealed. It will now be necessary to request the Police to put up signs at the present Acting Attorney-General's office, which is in a house where the milk is sold, to the effect that the milk is pure and of good quality. The milk is sold in a house where the milk is sold, to the effect that the milk is pure and of good quality. The milk is sold in a house where the milk is sold, to the effect that the milk is pure and of good quality.

## STUPID MISTAKES.

Of the inaccuracies concerning the East and things pertaining to it, which find their way into English and American papers, there is no end. It would indeed be a task to undertake to correct all the mis-statements made in print about Eastern Asia, and most of them are necessarily almost to even notice. Some of the most common mistakes are the following:—The "oblong" is a word which is often found among the blunders. We should, however, scarcely have credited the *St. James's Gazette* with the gross ignorance displayed in the following paragraph, which we reproduce verbatim from its issue of the 11th inst:—

## SUICIDE OF MR. P. TENNANT.

Mr. P. Tennant, partner in the firm of Messrs. Gibb, Livingston & Co., committed suicide on Friday morning (8th inst.) by shooting himself through the head with a fowling piece. The deceased gentleman came down from the Peak to his office in the morning about half-past eight o'clock. He opened several letters, and while engaged in translating a telegram, he suddenly fell, his office went down, and he was found lying on the floor, bleeding from the head. The coroner, with several constables, went there to the scene, and found the deceased lying on the floor, bleeding from the head. The coroner, with several constables, went there to the scene, and found the deceased lying on the floor, bleeding from the head.

The news of the death of the deceased gentleman was received with regret by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. He was about 45 years of age and had been in Hongkong for nearly a quarter of a century. Although he was a very quiet and unassuming man, he was a very capable and energetic man. He was a very capable and energetic man. He was a very capable and energetic man. He was a very capable and energetic man.

## MAJESTY'S REQUEST.

At the Magistrate's, on the 8th inst., the Hon. Mr. Justice, in the case of *Charles Frederick Gibson, clerk in Messrs. Gibb, Livingston & Co., v. Messrs. Gibb, Livingston & Co.*, said:—I am in the office on the 8th inst. about 9 a.m. I did not see the deceased arrive. He had arrived before me. I saw him in the office. I saw him in the office. I saw him in the office. I saw him in the office.

## DEPARTURE OF HON. A. P. MACLEOD FROM HONGKONG.

A large number of residents, including several prominent Chinese, assembled in the Chamber of Commerce Room, City Hall, on the 4th inst. for the purpose of presenting the Hon. A. P. Macleod with a testimonial. The testimonial was a large and valuable one, and was presented to the Hon. A. P. Macleod by the Chamber of Commerce. The Hon. A. P. Macleod, who acted as spokesman, said:—I am very much pleased to address you this morning, inasmuch as I am the exponent of the feelings of a large number who are present. I do not know of any other person who has been so successful in his career. I do not know of any other person who has been so successful in his career. I do not know of any other person who has been so successful in his career.

concerning the telegram expected was so great that seeing this was from Mr. A. Gibb & Co., he was afraid to finish translating it. He was not troubled by the telegram, but he was troubled by the telegram. He was not troubled by the telegram, but he was troubled by the telegram. He was not troubled by the telegram, but he was troubled by the telegram.

## HONGKONG SANITARY BOARD.

A meeting of the Sanitary Board was held on the 5th inst. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided.

## THE MARINE HOTEL.

A letter was read from the Acting Secretary of the Hongkong Land Investment and Agency Company, Limited, to the effect that the certificate of completion of the Marine Hotel had been received, and that the occupation of the premises before receipt of the certificate was due to an inadvertence, as he understood the necessary certificate had been obtained by the architect; he would take every precaution in future to avoid similar mistakes.

## AMENDMENT OF DRAINAGE BY-LAWS.

The amendments of the drainage by-laws suggested by the Attorney-General and Mr. Chadwick were adopted, with a slight alteration suggested by Mr. E. B. Brown. The amendments of the drainage by-laws suggested by the Attorney-General and Mr. Chadwick were adopted, with a slight alteration suggested by Mr. E. B. Brown. The amendments of the drainage by-laws suggested by the Attorney-General and Mr. Chadwick were adopted, with a slight alteration suggested by Mr. E. B. Brown.

## PUBLIC CONVENTIONS.

A C.S.O. was read stating that measures were being taken with regard to the provision of public conveniences. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided.

## THE PRESIDENT-YEAR.

The Colonial Surgeon, who is the usual in Battery Park, was going to be removed to the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank. The Colonial Surgeon, who is the usual in Battery Park, was going to be removed to the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank. The Colonial Surgeon, who is the usual in Battery Park, was going to be removed to the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank.

## INSANITARY CONDITION OF EAST POINT.

Papers which had already been circulated relating to the insanitary condition of East Point, the President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided. The President, Mr. J. D. Thompson, presided.



